

Virginia Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee Newsletter



Vol I, Issue II | Dec 2016

SIEC Meets at VA APCO/NENA/Interoperability Conference

October 25th —Hotel Roanoke

Maintaining the momentum generated at the August 4th kick off meeting, twenty-two SIEC members gathered at Hotel Roanoke to continue discussion, receive updates on various topics, and shape the Committee's priorities. Also joining the group to provide guidance and offer insights was Deputy Secretary Curtis Brown. Members from the Office of Emergency Communication and First Responders Network Authority (FirstNet) participated and provided updates from their respective agencies.

The meeting kicked off with Deputy Secretary Brown reiterating the importance of the SIEC and its future role in shaping and sustaining public safety communications. He commented that the committee must help educate government about the tremendous investments made into public safety communications and the need for sustainment planning.

Following Deputy Secretary Brown, Tom Schull and Lori Stone representing FirstNet provided the group with information on network deployment and the Governor's opt-in/opt-out decision process. Committee members suggested that FirstNet make an effort to include localities' IT personnel in future outreach efforts. Tom and Lori's presentation was very helpful for SIEC members since the Committee will be expected to provide its own assessment of FirstNet's proposed plan for a Virginia public safety broadband network to the Governor.

Following FirstNet, the Office of Emergency Com-

munications (OEC) provided an update on OEC's plan to modify Technical Assistance (TA) program offerings and to require future TA requests be linked to objectives stated within the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). OEC's brief was particularly helpful since Virginia's 2017 TA submission will be vetted by the SIEC and the SIEC is also preparing to draft the 2017 SCIP in the coming months.

The Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) provided an update on efforts to shape the management of the Commonwealth Link to Interoperable Communications (COMLINC) system into a sustainable, state sponsored program. To date, growing and sustaining COMLINC has been a collection of disjointed efforts by various state and local subscribers. In order to maximize efficiencies in an increasing challenging fiscal environment, future actions must be part of a coordinated plan developed through the collaborative efforts of local and state COMLINC participants. Current actions toward establishing an overarching plan include:

- 1) Establishing a statewide service contract with the SyTech Corporation.
- 2) Reconvening the COMLINC Advisory Group.
- 3) Developing a sustainable training program.
- 4) Developing the SIEC's role in shaping public safety communications grant requests.

Other SIEC projects were discussed that various members have volunteered to spearhead. These projects include SCIP draft development, Statewide

Nomenclature / Identification best practices, and COMLINC subscribers' MOU review. All members are invited to participate in any project or subcommittee that interests them. For more information contact Tom Gagnon.

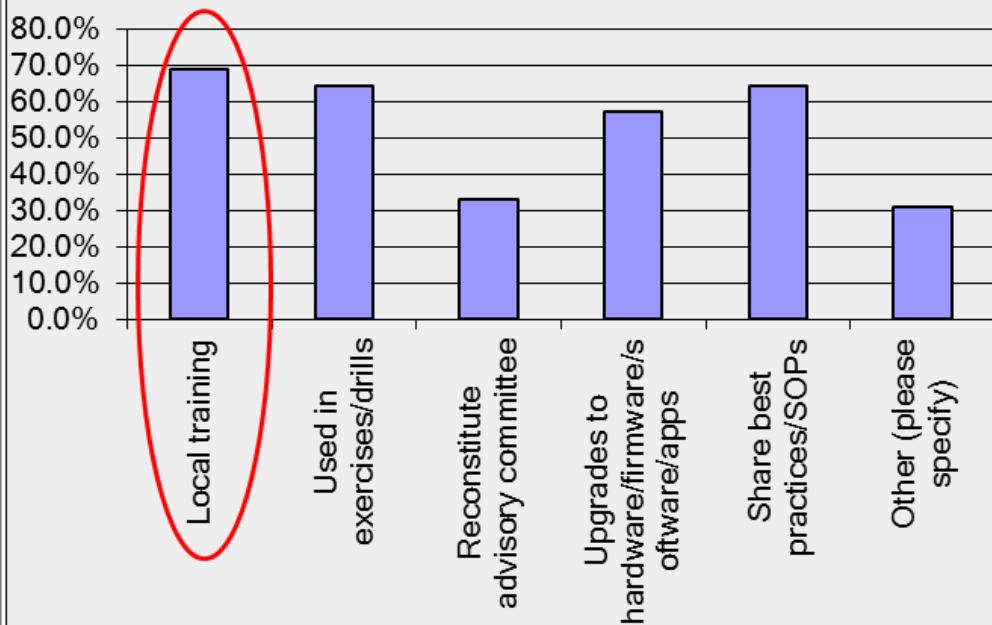


SIEC members receiving updates on public safety communications topics impacting the Commonwealth.

Training is Key to COMLINC's Success

A recent survey of Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) leadership indicates that local training is critical to the success of the COMLINC program. While recent ROIS training probably gets close to what "right looks like", the challenge is now sustaining this training to increase interest, usage, and ultimately the relevancy of COMLINC across the Commonwealth. Previous state-sponsored classes provided a basic overview of gateway technologies and largely missed the need for practical, hands-on operator skills training. The current curriculum is condensed into a 3.5 hour session, tailored to meet the needs of busy PSAP personnel. Future training will be spearheaded by Carol Adams, who also serves as the Virginia Public Safety Broadband Outreach program assistant. PSAPs interested in scheduling COMLINC training are encouraged to contact Carol at Carol.Adams@vdem.virginia.gov.

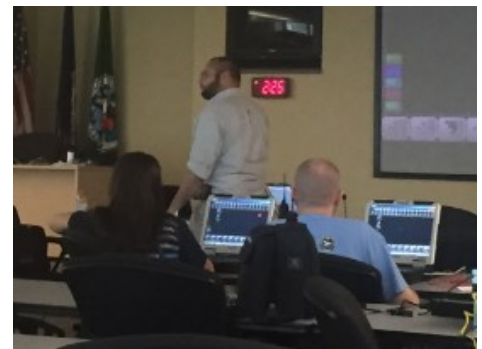
What is needed to make COMLINC successful? Check all that apply.



Survey results highlight importance of training.

Radio Interoperability Operating System (RIOS) Training Results

The Virginia State Police Communications Division, Office of Emergency Communications, and several Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) supervisors collaborated to develop a series of RIOS operator classes conducted the week of September 25th. Focusing on practical operator skills, a total of 97 students participated at three sites. Based upon the amount of unsolicited positive feedback from students, the training appears to meet the need of busy PSAP personnel who need a quick refresher on how to use the RIOS and its functions. With a proven model for future RIOS training, the challenge is how to sustain this success.



David Mulcahy fields a question from a student at the Roanoke County EOC

Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) Discusses Technical Assistance (TA) Program

Bruce Belt and Marty McLain from OEC attended the Roanoke meeting and provided a quick update on the Office's TA program. The TA program has been a tremendous asset to the Commonwealth, supporting everything from COMT training, to planning workshops, to the recent Radio Interoperability Operating System (RIOS) training. To better align with states' efforts to improve public safety communications interoperability, TA requests will only be approved if they directly link to objectives stated within a state's Statewide Interoperability Communications Plan (SCIP). To further support Virginia's reinvigorated governance efforts, OEC will require future TA requests from the Commonwealth be approved by the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) prior to OEC consideration. For the SIEC, this means vetting TA requests and developing an annual prioritized TA request submission. Having the SIEC put together this annual request insures equitable, transparent consideration for the numerous requests competing for limited TA dollars. While an exact due date for the 2017 submission is still to be determined, SIEC members can expect to work on building the next submission in early 2017.

Welcome Aboard!!! - Effective Jan 1, 2017, Jamie Miller assumes the duties of RPAC-I Region 3 Chair, replacing Melissa Foster as the region's SIEC representative, and Jason Malloy will serve as the VA NENA representative to the SIEC.

Let's Get It Together!

The last Virginia Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) was published in 2013. The Plan outlined an ambitious campaign to improve interoperability along several concurrent lines of effort. Modeled upon the Interoperability Continuum, SCIPs are considered capstone documents, which tie together a state's collective efforts to enhance interoperability.

Starting in December, a subcommittee will form to begin a review of the 2013 SCIP and development of a proposed 2017 SCIP, which will incorporate initial recommendations from the SIEC-at-large and guidance from Deputy Secretary Brown. The 2017 SCIP must be realistic and sustainable; overly ambitious strategies with numerous goals lacking sufficient means to obtain them only result in stalled momentum and disheartened stakeholders. Subcommittee members will evaluate a handful of realistic, meaningful objectives that collectively advance the Commonwealth's interoperability and set the stage for future successful strategies.

Meaningful objectives may include fostering increased regionalism by developing appropriate grant proposal criteria, encouraging the implementation of emerging technologies through collaboration with appropriate federal agencies, and supporting sustainment of current communication resources by engaging elected officials.

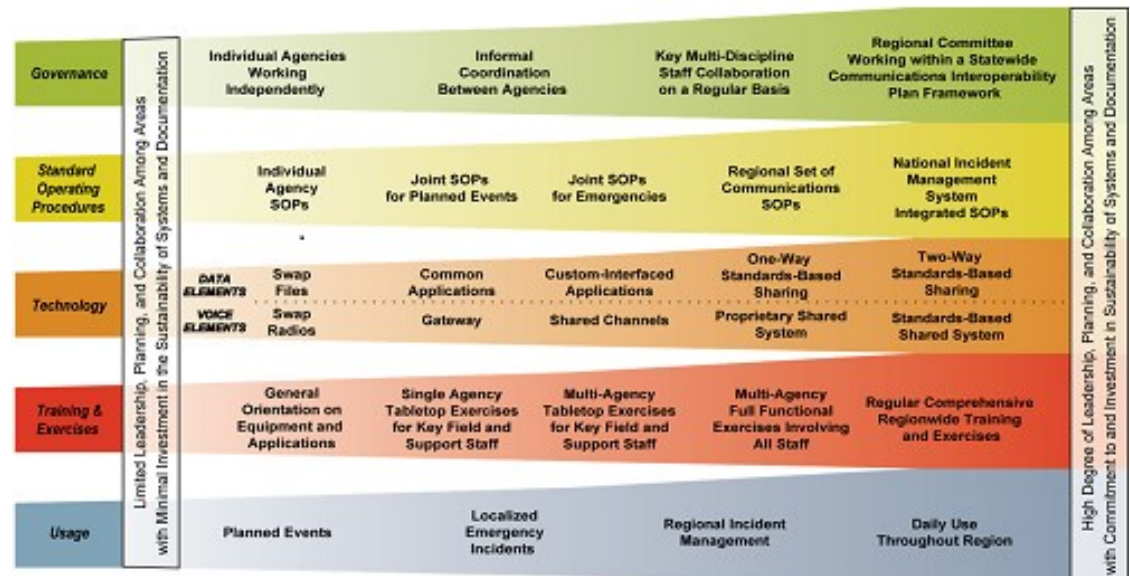
Whatever the objectives may become for 2017, they must be feasible and relevant to what the Commonwealth's public safety communications practitioners want to see get accomplished. The SCIP should be a policy document that grant writers can cite in support of their proposals for public safety communications enhancements. Leadership within the Virginia Public Safety and Homeland Security Office should be able to utilize the SCIP to develop talking points and answer inquiries from elected officials.

The SCIP represents our playbook explaining how we intend to get from where we are today to where we want to go. It doesn't have to be complicated and elaborate, but instead straightforward and easy for any reader to connect the dots...starting with our current status then followed by clear, obtainable objectives to accomplish a defined vision.

SEIC members can expect to hear an in-progress update from the subcommittee at the next meeting.



Interoperability Continuum



https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/interoperability_continuum_brochure_2.pdf

About the Virginia SIEC Newsletter

The *SIEC Newsletter* serves as a source of information, news, and updates for SIEC members and all public safety communications stakeholders.

Comments and inquiries may be forwarded to :

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Next SIEC Meeting:

- December 15 at the VDEM Emergency Operations Center
- 7700 Midlothian Turnpike
- 10:00 am—2:00 pm

Virginia Public Safety Broad-band Network Website:
<https://vapsbn.virginia.gov>

